



# The Toggle Iron

## Wayside Exhibit Project in Final Phase

The City of New Bedford, through its Department of Public Facilities, assembled 42 new outdoor interpretive and orientation panels and has begun installing them throughout the downtown and working waterfront. The installation is being completed by a team of masons and craftsmen who are truly making quality “job #1” for this project.

Installing the panels—found literally “by the wayside” throughout the downtown urban environment—has presented the city’s “wayside team” with a variety of challenges. Sidewalk materials change from brick to bluestone to concrete and the simpler installations in grassy areas are few and far between. “The installation phase of this project is going well” said Deputy Superintendent Tom Ross. “Each site has some challenge with getting the panel in the ground, and these guys have done the job every time.” The installation of the panels is scheduled to be completed for the summer season.

Harpers Ferry Center, the design and interpretive media center for the National Park Service, designed the new system of panels for the park. The project is being funded by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration’s Public Lands Highway Program and also includes the installation of exhibits at the City of New Bedford’s Wharfinger Building. This project was identified as a priority in the park’s General Management Plan or “master plan” which is guiding park operations and development over the next 15 years.



A City DPF craftsman at work installing a wayside panel at State Pier.

## From the Superintendent

The spring thaw in New Bedford signaled two things for us—a welcome return of visitors strolling around the cobblestone streets of the historical park, and a flurry of activity as streets, sidewalks and facilities were not only spring cleaned and spruced up, but in many cases “kicked up a notch.” This edition of *The Toggle-Iron* highlights some of the improvements being undertaken by the National Park Service in league with the City of New Bedford. The city’s Department of Public Facilities (DPF) crews are a talented group of people—proud of their work and skilled in executing it. We are pleased to showcase them and invite you to see the results of their hard work by visiting with us this summer.

John Piltzecker

## Improvements to Wharfinger Underway

Improvements to the interior of the city’s Waterfront Visitor Center, located in the Wharfinger Building on New Bedford’s waterfront, are underway in preparation for the new exhibit *A Working Waterfront*. The city’s Department of Public Facilities (DPF) took the first steps by painting the windows and installing new exterior doors to the exhibit space.

The most dramatic change to the space is the removal of the acoustical tile ceiling to expose the steel beams and wood planking of the original ceiling. This work will bring the appearance of the interior of the building back to its original look when it was the site of the city’s commercial fish auction (1947-85). The ceiling will be painted in a 1960’s color scheme

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# Wharfinger

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and new track lighting will be installed to highlight the new exhibit elements and light the space.

The exhibit, scheduled to be installed in May, will rely on first hand accounts from individuals in the fishing industry and vintage photos to tell the story. The National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center is managing the project. The project is funded by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Public Lands Highway Program.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park was established in 1996 to help preserve and interpret America's nineteenth century whaling history. The park encompasses a 13-block National Historic Landmark District and addresses the history of the whaling industry and its influence on the economic, social, and environmental history of the United States.

**New Bedford Whaling  
National Historical Park**  
33 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
[www.nps.gov/nebe](http://www.nps.gov/nebe)  
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**Park Visitor Center**  
(508) 996-4095

**Park Headquarters**  
(508) 996-4469  
**Fax** (508) 994-8922

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



**Temple Toggle-Iron:** The most successful harpoon ever made. Invented by Lewis Temple, an African American whalecraft-maker of New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1848, and at first called "porpoise iron" and "Temple's gig." It became the universal whale iron, and has never been improved upon. (From Clifford W. Ashley's, *The Yankee Whaler*)



## City Forces in Action

The city's Department of Public Facilities (DPF) has had a team of carpenters, masons and craftsmen working on the assembly and installation of the wayside and orientation panels. Shown here are the guys hard at work.

Above: New planking needed to be installed outside of the Warfinger Building in preparation for the new exhibits.

Left: Existing panels that were installed during the 1980s are removed to make way for the updated wayside exhibits.

Below: The final installation of the wayside exhibit frames requires an experienced hand.



# Readathon Commemorates Douglass

In February, the New Bedford Historical Society hosted the Fifth Annual Community Readathon of the first autobiography of Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. The event was held in celebration of African American History Month and honored Douglass as one of the great men of the 19th century and one of the early advocates for African American civil rights and the rights of women.

This event honored the historical connection between the people of New Bedford and the young Frederick Douglass, whose first free home was in New Bedford. Douglass escaped to New Bedford via the Underground Railroad in 1838. Carrying another seamen's protection papers and accompanied by his new wife Anna, Frederick Douglass boarded a train from Baltimore to Philadelphia. From Philadelphia, he headed further north to New York, then to Newport by steamship



before finally taking a stagecoach from Newport to New Bedford. He arrived at the home of African American abolitionists, Nathan and Polly Johnson, located at 21 Seventh Street. Douglass stayed in New Bedford for 5 years, where he worked and started his family. Three of his five children were born in New Bedford. The Nathan and Polly Johnson home is a National Historic Landmark and now serves as the offices for the New Bedford Historical Society.

The Readathon was sponsored by the New Bedford Historical Society, an organization that seeks to increase the awareness of the lives of people of color and the contributions they have made to the history, culture, and political life of the City of New Bedford.

Above left: Park Ranger Frank Barrows reads at this year's Frederick Douglass Readathon.

Left: A young Frederick Douglass. This is probably what he looked like when he arrived in New Bedford in 1838.

## Team Travels to Azores to Install Exhibition

A team of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park partners will travel to Lagoa, Sao Miguel, Azores, Portugal under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of International Research Programs from May 13-20, 2004 to install the *At the Crossroads: Traditions in Azorean Craft and Culture*. Lagoa was chosen because many of the artisans featured in the exhibit are from that region as well as the strong cultural ties between the cities of New Bedford and Lagoa.

The *At the Crossroads* exhibit was the result of a research trip by New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and non-profit and educational partners in November 2002. The team visited the Azorean Islands of Sao Miguel, Faial and Pico as a cultural exchange to strengthen ties between cultural institutions in the Azores and New Bedford

as well as to undertake research on our shared whaling heritage and cultural traditions. The research collected during this trip was developed into the exhibition and catalogue.

*At the Crossroads* showcases traditional handcrafts and the artisans that make them, incorporating photography and the artisans' own words to bring the craft objects to life, telling the story of what it means to be a traditional artisan in a modern, post-industrial world. The exhibition includes examples of Azorean ceramics, lace, weaving and basketry, as well as art forms that are less familiar to American audiences: figurines from maize mats, corn husk dolls, fish scale art, and the crafts of blacksmiths, coopers, and scrimshanders. The exhibit was curated by Professor Kerrie Bellisario, Lesley University and was designed with the intent to travel it to the Azores. The exhibit was

hosted in New Bedford at ArtWorks! Gallery between June and November 2003.

The five person team is Karen Allen, Manager Programs and Visitor Services, and Helena Hartnett, Director of Development, New Bedford Whaling Museum; Arthur Motta, Director of Tourism and Marketing, City of New Bedford; Kerrie Bellisario, Assistant Professor, Creative Arts in Learning Division, Lesley University; and Stephen Peixoto, Exhibit Carpenter.

All mailing services for the Toggle Iron are provided courtesy of Riverview Marketing, New Bedford, MA





# Volunteer Spotlight

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**Name:** Jane Harrop

**Age:** 68

**City/Town you live in:**  
Dartmouth

**Family:** husband: Bill,  
one son, one daughter,  
four grandchildren

**Occupation:** Research Interviewer - part- time

**Special Interests/Hobbies:** Family time, traveling, reading, continuing education - I recently completed the Manning Certificate Program in Gerontology at UMASS- Boston

**How long have you been a volunteer at the visitor center?** 4 Years

**Why did you decide to become a volunteer?** I was a member of the first walking tour class 25 years ago. We operated from the Whaling Museum and I gave tours for 3 years. When I went to work I gave up my volunteering. Now that I'm semi-retired I wanted to volunteer again in the historic district

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering at the visitor center?** Meeting people from all over this country and the world and giving them the help and information they need to have a great time in our area, so they can tell others what a special place New Bedford is to visit.

**What is the most interesting thing that you've done in your life?** Growing up I changed schools 5 times because my family moved as part of my father's job. It gave me a unique outlook on meeting people and maintaining friendships. I even had my high school graduation ceremony in the Rose Bowl!

**What is the one thing that you'd like to do or try?** I've always wanted to write "the great American novel." At this point in my life I guess I still have time for a short story at least!

**If you grew up in this area, what is one of your fondest memories?** I've lived here 45 years. I enjoyed shopping downtown at Wings, Lloyds, and Silversteins on South Water St. I loved home - delivered milk from King's Dairy, pizza from the Depot Cafe, Lincoln Park with the children, and the Paskamansett Golf Course where the mall is currently located.



**Name:** Bernice Forcier

**Age:** 62

**City/Town you live in:**  
Aachusnet

**Family:** Husband: Hank,  
Daughter: Cheryl, Two  
Grandchildren: Alex and  
Nicole

**Occupation:** Retired Registered Nurse

**Special Interests/Hobbies:** Travelling, especially cruising and also handiwork such as crewel and needle point as well as having my grandchildren for extended stays

**How long have you been a volunteer at the visitor center?** 1 Year

**Why did you decide to become a volunteer?** Upon retiring from a full time nursing job where I worked with handicapped youngsters, I wanted to still remain active and enjoyed working with people. I was introduced to this by a friend who is also a volunteer.

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering at the visitor center?** I am continuously amazed at the number of visitors who are from Europe who have heard of this area. It is a pleasure to help them find their way around the historic area.

**What is the most interesting thing that you've done in your life?** My husband and I have been very fortunate to have cruised to Europe three times. Visiting Russia was a highlight as was visiting other major cities in Europe that most people only get to read about.

**What is the one thing that you'd like to do or try?** For the most part I would just love to continue to be able to travel and meet people.

**If you grew up in this area, what is one of your fondest memories?** As a child I remember riding the "trolley" from the South End of New Bedford to the North End to visit my grandmother. I also remember roller skating at the "Acushnet Park" - now the parking lot for the East Beach in the South End.

# Park Crew List



**Name:** Tom Ross

**Job Title:** Deputy Superintendent

**Town you live in:** New Bedford, MA

**Hometown:** Acushnet, MA

**Family:** wife- Kerrie, son- Cameron “Cam” -8 months

**Interests/Hobbies:** Biking, jogging, hiking, traveling, Patriots season ticket holder, community service work, spending time with my family

**Duties Performed at Park:** On a whaling ship, Tom would be the first mate or second in command. As “deputy” he acts on behalf of the park superintendent, managing all aspects of the park’s operation, including visitor services and programs, administration, safety, resource protection and preservation, and maintenance. A community planner by background, Tom is the National Park Service contact for downtown projects affecting the park. He fosters and facilitates partnerships with other federal agencies, the state and municipal government, nonprofit institutions and community organizations. Tom is also the park’s lead on all international cooperative projects. He makes sure our ship sails a smooth course and that we take advantage of every partnership opportunity.



## Training Program Kicks Off Busy Season

With an eye towards warmer weather and a desire to hone the skills needed to serve the visitors who soon will be arriving at our doorstep, new and returning volunteers attended the first sessions of the 2004 volunteer training program. Park Superintendent John Piltzecker and Chief of Visitor Services Jennifer Gonsalves kicked off the ten-week program with an introduction to the park, a preview of summer events and a glimpse into ongoing projects.

Content sessions will include a lecture on the shoreside businesses that supported the whaling industry, the Underground Railroad in New Bedford, a program at the Seamen’s Bethel (the “whalemen’s chapel” made famous in Melville’s novel Moby - Dick), and a two-part lecture on architecture in the park. The training program wraps up with sessions on customer service and interpretation. Jennifer Gonsalves’ comments on the training program: “Because of the wide variety of expertise and knowledge that members of the park staff and our community partners have, we are able to develop a training program that keeps returning volunteers challenged and interested while at the same time providing a good base for new volunteers to start with. The volunteer training program provides us with an opportunity to brush up on our skills and expand our knowledge of the resource getting everyone in shape for the busy season.”

Below is a schedule of upcoming volunteer training sessions. In late June, additional walking tours will be offered to those in the Volunteer Training Program.

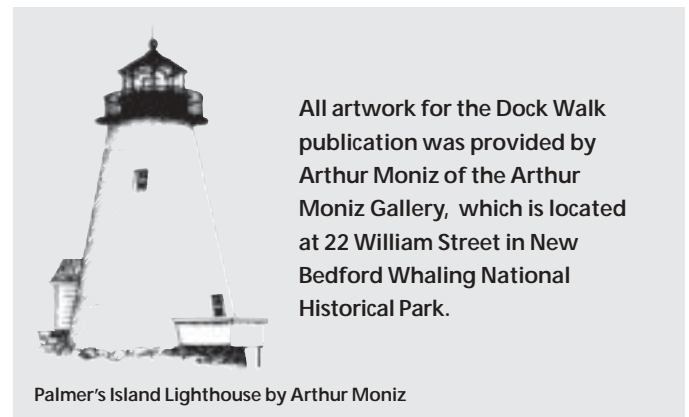
Upcoming Volunteer Training Sessions		
May 3	Whaling & Shoreside Industry 7-9 p.m. WM Library	May 17
May 8	Architecture in the Park 101 10 -12 Visitor Center	May 22
May 10	New Bedford Port Society 7-9 p.m. Seamen’s Bethel	May 24
May 15	Putting A Tour Together 10 -12 Visitor Center	June 4
		June 5
		June 10
		June 12
		June 24

# Dockwalk Publication Highlights Waterfront



A new park produced publication offers visitors an opportunity to explore the working waterfront and learn about the fishing fleet that has consistently made New Bedford the number one fishing port in the country in terms of the dollar value of its catch. The site bulletin, entitled “Working Waterfront Dock Walk” compliments the newly installed wayside panels that are located throughout the waterfront and the park, and the exhibit being installed in the Waterfront Visitor Center (Wharfinger Building).

The site bulletin is a self-guided walking tour that takes visitors on a journey along the piers and wharves of New Bedford’s working waterfront. It highlights the different types of boats found in the harbor, some of the prominent landmarks in the harbor, and a view into the workings of an authentic seaport community. Today’s contemporary waterfront reflects New Bedford’s past as the whaling capital of the world. Whether you’re from out of town or a local, we invite you to come learn more about this fascinating story. Several other self-guided tour options including Melville’s New Bedford, The Underground Railroad in New Bedford and The Nautical Mile are available at the Visitor Center.



## Corson Building Update

On April 5, 2004, the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) donated the Corson Building to the United States of America. The gift was made by WHALE to facilitate the transformation of the Corson Building into the park’s education and public program center.

Superintendent John Piltzecker stated: “Creating space for the park to engage students and teachers, and to involve the public in discovering the region’s rich cultural heritage was identified as a key priority for the National Park Service and its local partners during the development of the park’s master plan. We intend to design program spaces that serve multiple needs and purposes. Our goal now is to see how we can phase the project to make the best use of the funds that were appropriated by Congress for this year. We thank WHALE for this generous gift to the American people.”

The Corson Building, located next to the park Visitor Center and across from the New Bedford Whaling Museum, actually consists of two three-story brick structures built in 1875 and 1884. For many years, the building housed Moby-Dick Marine Specialties, a popular shopping stop. In 1997, a fire ripped through the building, destroying its roof and top two floors. WHALE came to the building’s rescue, hiring a structural engineer who convinced the City Building Commissioner that the building could be saved. WHALE acquired the building and secured the funds for its stabilization. As part of the donation to the United States, Moby-Dick Marine Specialties will again operate their retail shop on the building’s first floor once the building is rehabilitated. Look for updates on the Corson Building project in future editions of The Toggle-Iron.



# Park Helps Youth Experience Their America

Since the start of the new year the park has helped over 300 area students learn more about the National Park Service and New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park through outreach and after-school programs. The park continued a partnership with the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth and the New Bedford Public Schools to provide guidance and expertise to participants in the Speech Academy after-school program.

The park also collaborated with Hayden-McFadden Elementary School to help 3rd graders learn about the Underground Railroad. This was the first year 3rd graders were required to learn about the Underground Railroad in the school's curriculum. The park was able to share knowledge and resources with teachers at the elementary school and also provide an overview of the Underground Railroad for the entire 3rd grade class. Students learned about some of the myths and realities associated with the Underground Railroad story and learned about some of the 300-700 escaped slaves who came to New



Park Ranger Frank Barrows with first graders from the Winslow School.

Bedford, including Frederick Douglass. A follow-up Underground Railroad walking tour is scheduled for the third graders in May.

The park has also reached out to New Bedford High School freshmen learning about the Underground Railroad, first

graders at the Winslow School learning about national parks and students at Roosevelt Middle School who are interviewing local icons to answer the question “what it means to be a success.” For information about the park’s youth programs, contact Frank Barrows at (508) 996-4095 extension 13.



## Rescue Rangers Bowl For Art



Chief of Visitor Services, Jennifer Gonsalves, shows her stuff at this year's event.

This year's Bowl -for- Art fundraiser, held at the Wonder Bowl in New Bedford on April 6, raised over \$8,000 to support the collaborative AHA! (Art-History-Architecture) program, downtown New Bedford's monthly arts and culture night. The Bowl-for-Art is the program's primary fundraiser. The AHA! program relies primarily on grants and donated funds to support its operation.

AHA! is held on the second Thursday of each month, between the hours of 5:00 and 9:00 p.m. Downtown museums are open free to the

public and galleries, merchants, restaurants and arts organizations welcome everyone with free performances of music, theater, dance, lectures, exhibit openings and more. Participating venues offer a variety of events geared to families and adults of all ages.

This year's Bowl -for- Art included many AHA! partners, friends, and community leaders who came together at this fun event to show their support. Teams of bowlers

raised at least \$125 in pledges and prizes were awarded in categories such as high score, highest pledges raised and team spirit. The National Park team, “Chip and Dale’s Rescue Rangers” claimed second place for pledges raised, securing over \$900 to help support AHA! The park and AHA! thank all who made this event a success. To find out more about AHA! call (508) 264-8859 or visit the AHA! website at [www.ahanewbedford.org](http://www.ahanewbedford.org).

BOWLING LEAGUE RECORD										DATE 4/4/09	
TEAM Rescue Rangers					TEAM					LANE	
NAME	BOWLER'S NAMES	AVG.	ROLL 1	ROLL 2	ROLL 3	TOTAL	NAME	BOWLER'S NAMES	AVG.	ROLL 1	ROLL 2
	Frank	113	146	122							
	Laurie	75	77	69							
	Derek	100	116	117							
	Jim	121	152	97							
	Jerry/Ray	103	64	99							
	SUB-TOTAL		512	585	509	1,604		SUB-TOTAL			
	WON							HANDICAP			

Just for kicks - Here's a look at the Rescue Rangers' score card.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

New Bedford Whaling  
National Historical Park

**STAFF**

**Superintendent**  
John Piltzecker

**Deputy Superintendent**  
Thomas E. Ross

**Administrative Program Specialist**  
Michelle Spink

**Historical Architect**  
Derek Santos

**Chief of Visitor Services**  
Jennifer Gonsalves

**Park Ranger- Web and Publications Coordinator**  
Frank Barrows

**Park Ranger- Visitor Use Assistant**  
Alexandria Allen

This newsletter was produced in  
partnership with:

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02742



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

New Bedford Whaling  
National Historical Park  
33 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

# AHA!

**Art, History, & Architecture**

Downtown New Bedford's Arts & Culture Gallery Night

**the second Thursday of each month  
5-9 PM**

**All venues and programs are FREE!**

**Thursday, May 13**

**"Final Framing: A focus on emerging artists"**

**Thursday, June 10**

**"All Things Japanese"**

**Thursday, July 8**

**"Summer Sounds"**

**[www.ahanewbedford.org](http://www.ahanewbedford.org)**

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